



Dear Members of Congress:

We are a coalition of American Jews and Muslims who have come together to reaffirm our commitment to religious freedom and pluralism, to demonstrate solidarity with each other, and to advocate for public policy solutions to issues of common concern to our two communities and the entire country. We are Democrats, Republicans, and independents, business and civil society leaders, former members of Congress, and university professors who respect differences among us while emphasizing the bonds that unite us.

At a time of increased political polarization in our country, we have come together on a bipartisan basis to support the rights of religious minorities in the United States as enshrined in our Constitution, and to celebrate the contributions that Muslims and Jews have made to American democracy. We support the deep concerns with the President's Executive Order of January 27 on refugee policy expressed by many members of Congress both Republicans and Democrats. We are concerned with any bar on refugee or other immigration to the United States based on one's religion.

Our Council's top public policy priority is reversing the increase in hate crimes. Hate crimes intend to intimidate and spark fear in the community the victim represents. Like terror, a targeted hate crime is meant to wound not just an individual but a family, a school, a place of worship, a town, or even our entire nation. There was a 67 percent increase in hate crimes against Muslim Americans in 2015, according to FBI data, while Jews remain the targets of the most hate crimes based on religion.

The rise in hate crimes is a complex problem caused by many factors, and is marked as well by lack of public awareness of what is a hate crime, and lack of information within the affected communities. It is imperative that Congress work to strengthen our country's response to the increase in hate crimes, in particular by exercising its oversight responsibilities so as to ensure that the Justice Department maintains, and heightens, its work with state and local officials on hate crimes, and prosecutes such crimes at the federal level where necessary. Moreover, the Justice Department's coordination with the states should take place not only in the area of prosecutions, but also in the areas of public education and community relations.

Accurate data on hate crimes is essential to understanding the problem and to designing responses. Some states and counties report no hate crimes at all or very low rates. We are committed, as individuals and through our leadership of civil society and communal organizations, to working with state and local authorities and with local communities to help improve data collection of all hate crimes.

Ms. Raheemah Abdulaleem
Ms. Shakila Ahmad
Mr. Tahera Ahmad
Imam Shamsi Ali
Mr. Majid Alsayegh
Ms. Roberta Baruch
Mr. Stanley Bergman
Rabbi Angela Buchdahl
Ms. Rabia Chaudry
Senator Norm Coleman
Mr. Steven H. Collis
Rabbi Joshua Davidson

Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat
Iman Plemon El-Amin
Mr. Eli Epstein
Mr. S.A. Ibrahim
Representative Steven Israel
Mr. Farooq Kathwari
Ms. Daisy Khan
Mr. Suhail Khan
Mr. Farhan Latif
Mr. David Levin
Mr. Moses Libitzky
Senator Joseph Lieberman

Dr. Deborah E. Lipstadt
Imam Mohamed Magid
Mr. Dean Obeidallah
Mr. Talat Othman
Dr. Eboo Patel
Mr. Daniel Pincus
Rabbi Yehuda Sarna
Rabbi Julie Schonfeld
Mr. Arsalan Suleman
Imam Talib Shareef
Dr. Sayyid Syeed
Rabbi David Wolpe